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MAN WITH THE X-RAY EYES PERFORMS HIS MANY SEEMING MIRACLES WITH UNCANNY EASE

THE MAN WITH THE X-RAY EYES.

Scientists of Europe Puzzled by Inexplicable Power of Rafael Schermann, Who, From Handwriting or Even a Paper That Has Been Touched by the Subject, Seems to Be Able to Visualize His Past History and His Future, as in Long Reels of Motion Pictures—How He Forced a Confession From Anna Buchmann, Who Poisoned Two Husbands — Psychologists Subject Man and His Performances to Searching Tests.

The seeming miracles performed by the astounding man described in this story suggest the strange powers of the human mind, which are as yet unknown even to science. Science cannot explain his marvelous gift, but scientists of the highest standing vouch for the authenticity of the events recorded here. The author of the story, Charles Benedek, is a Hungarian journalist and magazine writer of the first rank. He is the Vienna correspondent of the New Zuricher Zeitung, and during the war acted as correspondent of the Vilag, the liberal daily of Budapest. Eugene S. Bagger, author of the notable book "Eminent Europeans," personally vouches for the reliability of Mr. Benedek.

BY CHARLES BENEDEK.

THE greatest psychic mystery of the old world today is the man with the X-ray eyes. In Vienna, his home, they also speak of him as the man for whom they are no secrets. He is the wonder of scientists, the talk of the newspapers, the white hope of all agencies engaged in ferreting out and prosecuting crime, the terror of the underworld. For Rafael Schermann—by this name that astonishing personage is known in his everyday relationships—has very firm convictions on the subject of social obligations. He believes that he holds his marvelous gift of second sight as a sort of trusteeship and that he must put its benefit at the disposal of the commonwealth. His exploits are verified by the rigorously scientific testimony of a number of experts, psychologists of established repute. The noted Prof. Benedikt of the University of Vienna has written a book about him. These scientists, however, confine themselves to stating the facts of the case. They frankly admit that explanation is beyond them.

Rafael Schermann's latest triumph was achieved with a 40,000,000 kronen forgery that occurred in one of the leading banks of the Austrian metropolis, an establishment on the fashionable Schottenring, well known to visiting Americans. The following account describes the case exactly as it appears on the police records, but with fictitious names substituted for those of the characters:

* * * *

ONE day, a few weeks ago, the manager of the bank summoned his secretary.

"Fraulein Schwarz," he said, "will you bring me the cashier's duplicate of that Goldenwasser deposit receipt for 40,000,000 Czechoslovak kronen?" (about $13,500 at present exchange rate). "There seems to be some little mistake about his initials. I can't make out the signature on his letter here."

"Yes, sir."

Half an hour later the manager was confronted by the perplexed girl.

"Awfully sorry, sir; they can't find it. Herr Kraus wishes to speak to you about it."

"Tell him to come in."

The cashier entered, excited and apologetic.

"Funny," he said. "We cannot find that confounded receipt. None of the receiving tellers knows anything about it. We have searched the whole office; there isn't a trace anywhere. And still the money must have been received. It is entered on the ledger as it should be. This man Goldenwasser—who is he, anyway? The 40,000,000 Czechoslovak kronen was his first deposit with us, and now he withdraws it after two weeks. Very queer."

There was a consultation, a renewed search and another consultation. This latter brought more clearness than satisfaction to the directors. There seemed to be no room for doubt. The bank had been defrauded. Herr Goldenwasser's deposit, sure enough, appeared on the books in the most unpeccably regular fashion. And there was nothing intrinsically suspicious about his letter, either—the one which, a few days before, had directed the bank to transfer the 40,000,000 to the Anglo-Austrian Bank. The sum was remitted, acknowledgment was received. And now it developed that the original entry was fictitious. The deposit had never been received. Perhaps Mr. Goldenwasser did not exist at all.

There was but one thing to do. The detectives arrived from headquarters and began their inquiry with the usual aplomb. They looked at Herr Goldenwasser's letter and shook their heads. They also looked at the entry in the ledger and shook their heads some more. One of them was dispatched to find Herr Goldenwasser.

"There is no such person as Herr Goldenwasser, leather merchant, at the address stated on the letterhead," he reported on his return.

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MEANWHILE his colleagues had better luck They examined the entry on the ledger. The manager said it was in the handwriting of Miss F., the head bookkeeper. The cashier agreed. So did several other officials. Miss F., an elderly lady of eminently respectable appearance, was forthwith put through a highly professional grilling in the manager's private office.

She was punctual, conscientious, unassuming, a model clerk, trusted by her superiors, liked by her fellow-employes. She had been with the bank for twelve years. And now, confronted with the forged entry, she could only declare most emphatically that she had not written it and protest with tearful vehemence against the accusation. Yet there was the testimony of the handwriting. It had been examined minutely by an expert from headquarters, who said, on comparing it with numerous other samples of Miss F.'s hand, that the identity was obvious.

"I am afraid we will have to make an arrest," whispered the commissioner of detectives to the bewildered manager.

There was a slight but ominous move toward the bookkeeper, but at this moment a little bearded man burst into the room. He was dressed with as much neatness as the extreme age of his well brushed clothes would permit. His sharp features contrasted strangely with the kind, somewhat absent-minded expression of his blue eyes. The manager of the bank greeted him eagerly, almost exuberantly.

"So glad you've come, Herr Schermann. You are the only person in the world who can straighten out this mess."

Succinctly the facts were laid before the newcomer. He was shown the letter in which the alleged Herr Goldenwasser instructed the bank to transfer his deposit to the Anglo-Austrian. He was shown the ledger with the fictitious entry. He looked at the two documents with an intensity that increased perceptibly until his face assumed the expression of acute pain. His mouth twitched, heavy drops of perspiration rolled down his forehead. At last he closed his eyes and stood silent for a few moments, covering his brow with a trembling hand. Suddenly he grabbed the arm of the detective commissioner, who, with the others in the room, had been watching the performance in dumb wonderment.

"Stop," shouted Schermann in a strained voice. "Leave that woman alone. She has nothing to do with the forgery."

The little man sat down, crossed his legs and began to talk, frowning heavily, his eyes still closed as if turned inward, penetrating unknown vistas of the fourth dimension.

"The forgery was perpetrated," Schermann said, "by a man. He imitated this lady's handwriting. It is a clumsy imitation, too. I can't see how he could deceive any of you. It follows, more or less, the curves of this lady's hand—there is a superficial resemblance—but the spirit, the abstract image of it, is entirely different. I'll tell you about it in a minute—it's the man who forged the entry who is the principal in this crime. The man who wrote the letter is a dummy. I can see him. He is a stout, clumsy fellow with a fleshy nose and bleary eyes. He is irresolute—he has no will of his own. I wonder what his trade is. It's one requiring much sitting and great attention and precision. He may be an optician or a watchmaker. I don't know. But you don't want him, anyway—not in the first place.

"You see, he participated in the fraud unwillingly. He first declined to do it, but he could not resist the personality of the real criminal. Him I don't quite see—not yet. But you must hurry to get him; he plans to escape tomorrow. One moment! I do see him now. He is young and handsome and slim. He has clever dark eyes. He is of good family. My God! I see his family now—his old father and mother—they are sitting in their shabby little flat, in tears, wringing their hands. They talk of suicide. They know what their son has done. Get him, quick! You must rescue the poor old couple! I'll single him out for you. He is in this office. But you can't nail down the forgery on him—you must make him confess—you must promise him immunity if he restores the money."

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IMMEDIATELY a line-up of all the employes of the bank was ordered. Herr Schermann sat down at a desk and the clerks were asked to pass one by one. Each had to write down the sentence, "I have nothing to do with the forty millions," and sign his name. Suddenly Schermann seized the hand of a young man and shouted: "You are the forger!"

The man jumped back as if hit in the face. And Schermann, still holding his hand, addressed him:

"Your name is Ludwig Neumann. You have just signed yourself Louis Neumann. You have a passport—you just got it—on which your name appears as Louis Nauheim. Don't try to deny it. I have seen it. You want to go to France. And I see your poor parents, heartbroken by your crime. They want to die rather than to live in shame. For their sake we'll let you go if you restore the money. Come."

But the young man had fainted dead away. When he was restored to consciousness he gulped down a drink of water and said:

"There's no use. I'll tell you all about it. I'll return the money."

He did tell all about it, incuding the name of his confederate, and added:

"Don't hurt him, poor ass. He did not want to do it. He has no will. I made him write the letter."

A detective brought in the accomplice. He was a stout, clumsy fellow, with a fleshy nose and bleary eyes, and he actually was a watchmaker.

Rafael Schermann, the little man of Jewish appearance who thus solved the mystery of the 40,000,000 kronen forgery in the Schottenring Bank, is the most remarkable case of "second sight" that has come to the notice of continental scientists in a generation or two. The psychologists who have examined him have returned the unanimous verdict that his performances are absolutely genuine, also absolutely beyond rational explanation. These scientists are willing to testify under oath as to his results, but they confess they have no idea as to how he achieves them.

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RAFAEL SCHERMANN is the most astounding phenomenon of our time. He is not a handwriting expert in the accepted sense of the term. He is not "scientific," he has no system. But a person's handwriting seems to fire him with an uncanny, supernatural second sight. He seems to be able to search out with deadly precision not only the character of the persons whose writing he may see, but also the unexpressed desires and intentions which lie deep in their minds.

When Schermann was in Zurich, a year or so ago, public interest was aroused to the fever point by the trial of a certain Frau Buchmann, who was accused of having poisoned her husband. It was a mystifying case. Frau Buchmann was a mystifying woman. The public prosecutor, Dr. Brunner, asked Schermann to pass an opinion on Frau Buchmann's handwriting. Schermann took one of the letters written by the woman and read it swiftly.

"This woman fears paragraphs," he said. "In her mind, as she wrote this, was a dread of certain articles in the penal code. You see here, clearly, a suggestion of the mark we use to designate paragraphs. She is afraid of being arrested and punished for a terrible crime she has committed. Yes! There can be no doubt. She is guilty. She poisoned her husband."

Dr. Brunner was hesitant and embarrassed.

"I am sorry, sir," he said. "That letter I showed you was written three years ago. She was not even married to Buchmann then."

"Impossible. The woman who wrote this letter was married."

"Married, yes. But to her first husband."

"Is Herr Hanhardt living?"

"No, he isn't. He—I recall it now—he died suddenly."

"I should like to meet Frau Buchmann," said the little wizard quietly.

Next day in Brunner's office Schermann was introduced to the woman. She bowed to him with perfect self-possession.

"Would you mind writing two sentences that I will dictate?" asked Schermann.

"No, certainly," she replied.

Schermann gave her paper and pen. "First, please write: 'I have poisoned my husband.'" She did so calmly with a perfectly steady hand. "Now, write: 'I have not poisoned my husband.'" She obeyed as before. "And sign your name."

Schermann took the paper and studied it. Then he looked directly at the woman.

"You are the murderess, and you will confess," he said.

Frau Buchmann losts sher poise instantly. She sprang to her feet and passionately denied the accusation. Schermann bowed and left the office. He started that day for Vienna. On his arrival there he found this telegram: "The woman has confessed. She poisoned both husbands."

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SCHERMANN is an insurance clerk by profession and was employed as such by the Phoenix Insurance Company of Vienna. His first case, which estsablished his fame as a psychic expert of transcendental power, grew out of a burglary in a leather factory. He was assigned to the job as a loss appraiser. The burglary was a most mysterious affair, with apparently not a single clue to work on. Schermann entered the shop and looked it over. At once he shuddered. People in the room were horrified to see the whites of his eyes turn up, his body convulse, his knees tremble. He stood there in a trance for a few seconds; then he walked to the head of the firm, who was watching from a corner.

"Mr. X.," he said in a hoarse whisper, "I know who committed the burglary. Look at that young man near the glass cabinet. He is one of your employes. I can't tell the police, because there is no evidence to convict him, and if he denies the crime I'd be liable for false prosecution. But show me a piece of his handwriting and I'll tell you whether he will confess or not."

The manager was astonished and incredulous, but he was willing to try. He called the suspected clerk into his office and dictated to him a few lines which he was to take down in longhand. Schermann stood by and watched the handwriting. Suddenly he spoke to the clerk.

"You are the burglar," he said calmly. "And I know now that you will confess. Now, come across, won't you?"

The young man dropped his pen, stammered incoherently, sank into a chair—and confessed.

On that day Schermann's career as insurance appraiser ended and his new one as amateur private detective began. But he is more than that—a reader of minds, crystal gazer, soothsayer.

The prodigiouss Herr Schermann is not difficult of approach. Every afternoon between 3 and 5 o'clock there is a pilgrimage of troubled folk to his humble abode on Untere Weissgarberstrasse, where he presides among his books and papers, thrown all over the place in a disorder not unlike that of Sherlock Holmes' celebrated apartment in Baker street. To

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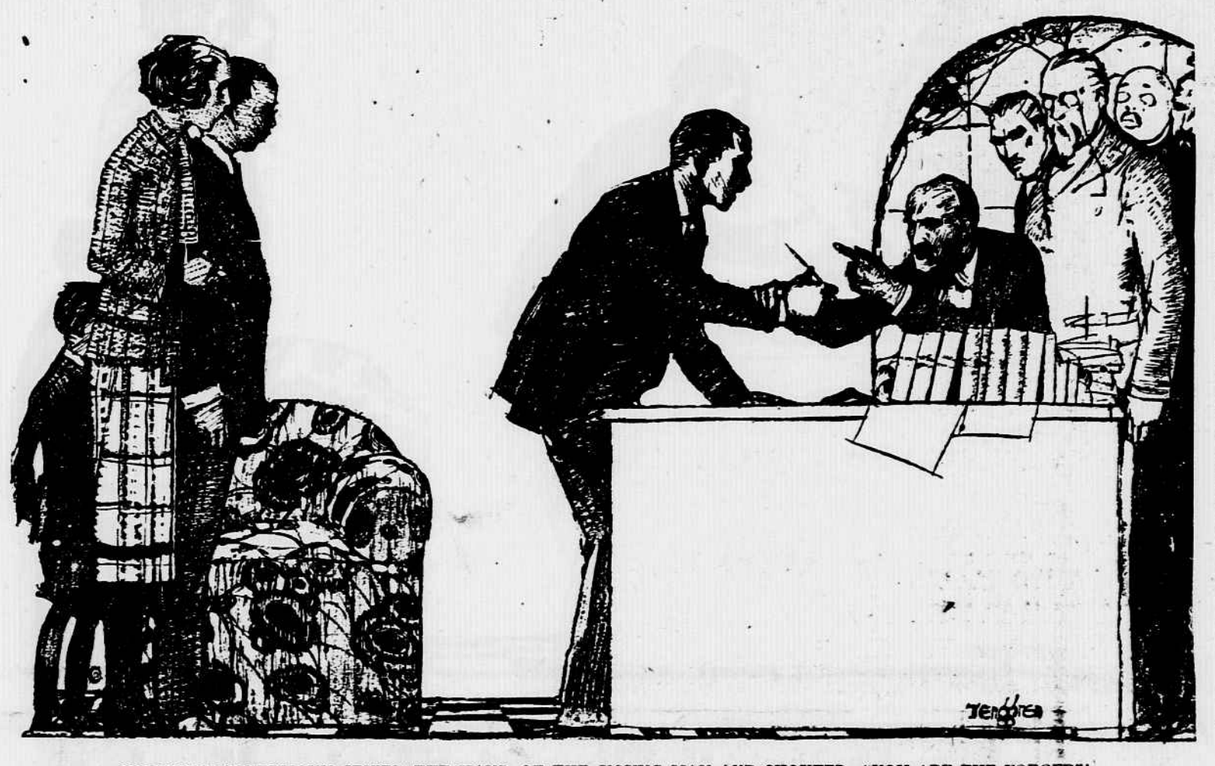

SUDDENLY SCHERMANN SEIZED THE HAND OF THE YOUNG MAN AND SHOUTED: "YOU ARE THE FORGER"!

Woman Pioneer in Movie Writing Tells of Her Struggle for Success

June Mathis, Who Wrote Scenario for "Four Horsemen," Began by Denouncing Pictures as Menace to the Drama—Was Member of Julian Eltinge's Company, in "The Fascinating Widow"—Convinced of Possibility of Improving Screen Art, Spent Two Years in Study, Preparing for Work—Forced to Overcome Opposition When She Was Climbing to Her Present Position as Leader in Profession—Calls Shakespeare "Greatest Screen Writer."

BY SARAH McDOUGALL.

OF the many women all over the land who would like to excel as scenario writers for the movies not one in a thousand does anything worth while. Why? June Mathis tried to explain and she illustrated the explanation with some of her own experiences in the past nine years while she was on her way to her present comfortable perch at the top of the profession. When she became editorial director for the Goldywn studios in November Miss Mathis assumed what is considered the most important executive job held by any woman in the movies.

"To be entirely satisfying to the feminine mind," remarked Miss Mathis, "a career must consist in tackling some corner of a tangle and working away at it until she feels the thing unraveling and taking a more beautiful form in her fingers. If a woman can keep calm and keep the ball in her own hands I think it helps rather than hinders to have a few men in the foreground who want it done their way."

With Miss Mathis it has been the movies all these years. Men have helped her and men have hindered her from the beginning. With her first great success, "The Four Horsemen," she emerged some seasons ago from a jumble that had been complicated by the attitude of some of the biggest motion picture men in the country. After that she did "Blood and Sand" and "The Rajah," and soon she will give us "Ben Hur."

When I went to ask this woman who creates pictures of great beauty and stirring drama to suggest what path others should pursue to arrive at the somewhat solitary heights, I found her so deeply absorbed in a book that her secretary had to call my name twice before she looked up. And when she slowly raised her eyes from a huge page of print there was in them a look of startled surprise. Later she told me that we had jolted her across a chasm of centuries from a thrilling world of long ago. She was sitting comfortably on her feet in a large upholstered chair with a Tissot Bible spread open across her knees.

Before her on the table was a barricade of the biggest Bibles in the world. "Ruth Gleaning" looked out from one colorful page. "Abimelech Slaying His Seventy Brethren" from another. A pair of book ends supported a reference library of "Medieval Pursuits," "Lives of the Prophets" and dictionaries of Greek and Roman biblical biography. The room where "Ben Hur" was being born again was large and even more sumptuously furnished than the average workshop for the movies. An oriental rug on the floor, a few Egyptian and Chinese works of art, a big sofa, several hospitable-looking chairs and two typewriters. Her office is in the Capital Theater building at 50th street and Broadway.

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LEISURELY the star woman scenario writer closed the big Bible and turned a pair of investigatory blue eyes on me—eyes that looked as if they belonged to an exceedingly peaceful person. But Miss Mathis has had her fights. Before she began to talk about herself I should have guessed her age to be about thirty. She must be older than that to have done all the things she has done. She is of medium height, not too slender and looks happy and healthy.

Her first fight against what looked like unfriendly destiny, June Mathias told me, took place in the altitudinous town of Leadville, Col. There, and later as a schoolgirl in Salt Lake City, it was her bad health she combated. For years people expected her to die almost any day. But because she was determined to live and have a good time she became a dancer. After her father's death she decided to succeed him as provider for the family, and with that idea in mind she went to visit an aunt in Los Angeles, where she got a job on the stage doing song and dance imitations. She was with the Julian Eltinge company four years and for two years she played the lead in "Brewster's Millions."

"The first time I thought seriously of the movies," she recalled, "was when I put them down as a menace to the drama. We were playing on the coast in 'The Fascinating Widow.' The season was bad and we blamed the pictures. My prejudice was intensified by a visit to a studio in a barn at Hollywood. The leading man was drunk and his neck was dirty. Everything impressed me as being shabby. Back in my dressing room I aired my views to the editor of a small paper who came to see me. He told me I had the wrong slant on the picture business, and he suggested that there was a big housecleaning job ahead for the right kind of women. Instead of wasting my breath scolding about bad scenarios, he said, I should be writing good ones. That was the first time any one had suggested to me that I could write, and the man was so serious and so complimentary that I was willing to be convinced. He argued that any one who could tell a good story should be able to write one. He took me to see the picture of Channing Pollock's 'Little Gray Lady.' I thought it was awful. All the charm and the drama had been left out. He agreed with me.

"With that California editor I visited the old Universal lot at Hollywood, and he introduced me to a number of interesting people. There, for the first time, I sensed that there were moving picture people who were working from a very serious angle, and it dawned on me that here was something that was going to be a really great business. On the way back I promised that editor that I would try my hand at writing. We decided it should be an Indian story I had told him the first time I saw him. That scenario has never been finished, but I recall it and the persistent Californian with something akin to sentiment for giving me the idea that switched me into a new world."

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AT the end of that season on the coast June Mathis left the stage. Predictions of better business and promises of better roles were of no avail. The movies were rather bad, and she had made up her mind that some day they would be good and she would help to bring about the change. That would be better, she decided, than growing too old to be a stage ingenue.

With a deliberateness that characterizes whatever she does, Miss Mathis planned her program. She expected to become a writer of very good scenarios. To do that she would need to know more about a number of things. One of these was literature. Another was story development. Another was history. Another was the movies. She brought her mother and her grandmother to New York and made a budget of their finances. She could afford to lay off work and study for two years. Every day throughout those two years she studied under tutors and almost every night she went to the movies.

Toward the end of her apprenticeship she changed her name to various aliases and played extra or anything in any company that could use her and give her a chance to learn the camera end of the trade. She lived in a world apart and that world was filled with things related to motion pictures. Shakespeare loomed large in study hours, and he still does; for she considers him the greatest screen writer of all time. Whenever she wants to round out a scene in flashback drama she can always get a hint from him.

"About the time when I felt I should have to go back to earning money," she told me, "I saw in a trade magazine the announcement of a prize scenario competition. I did not win the prize, but I received a number of letters. One was from Mr. Ince asking me to write a scenario for a popular actress. I was working feverishly on that story when another letter came from the Metro people offering me work in their office. I was with them seven years, and after the first fifteen months I became head of the scenario-writing department. The only reason why I should have been given preference over people who were older in the business was because I knew the fundamentals. I never deny that I have a natural knack for story development, but I have always leaned a good deal harder on study and hard work than on mere talent.

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"WHEN the plan to picturize the Ibanez book was suggested all the men in the business thought it impractical. They were convinced that a war picture would not take. Besides, it would be tremendously expensive. I wanted very much to write that scenario. Meanwhile it went begging in every office in the country before a producer would take it. Even after the Metro people got the rights there was a question whether we ought to go through with it. The more they resisted the stronger became my conviction that it would be a very big picture. Already I had made up my mind to do it and I had spent most of my vacation talking with Ibanez.

"When the picture was finally under way I made only two stipulations. One was that I should sit in on every set and the other was that Rodolph Valentino should play the lead. He was not widely known then, and I had never seen the boy, except in pictures. I feel very proud of him now, as I do of others who have been helped to prominence through my pictures. I went to California and kept my resolution to see every set of 'The Four Horsemen.' That meant standing out in the rain and working for as long as thirty-two hours on a stretch.

"Because I had nursed it through so much opposition I made up my mind that the picture had to be a great success. I had given up my department job for that venture and I meant that it should go in a big way. I edited it from beginning to end and wrote all the titles. Again and again I had been told that it was a gamble, and it turned out to be a good one. Since then other things have been easier."

JUNE MATHIS, WOMAN PIONEER OF THE NEWEST ART.

Speaking of her hopes for "Ben Hur," Miss Mathis said that she always thinks of it as "God's picture," and with a silent partner of such promience she has no fear of failure. She told me that when she took the draft of her scenario to Mr. Erlanger, who owns the stage and screen rights to the book, he surprised her by telling her that he had sketched a scenario, which he would like to read to her. Miss Mathis listened to the end.

"Now, wouldn't you like to hear mine?" she asked him, and, of course, Mr. Erlanger was properly eager. It happened that they were almost identical, scene for scene, which Miss Mathis considers a good omen for her forthcoming picture.

As we sauntered across the hall and into her apartment I asked the star scenario writer what she does for recreation. "Why, I go to the movies, of course," said she.